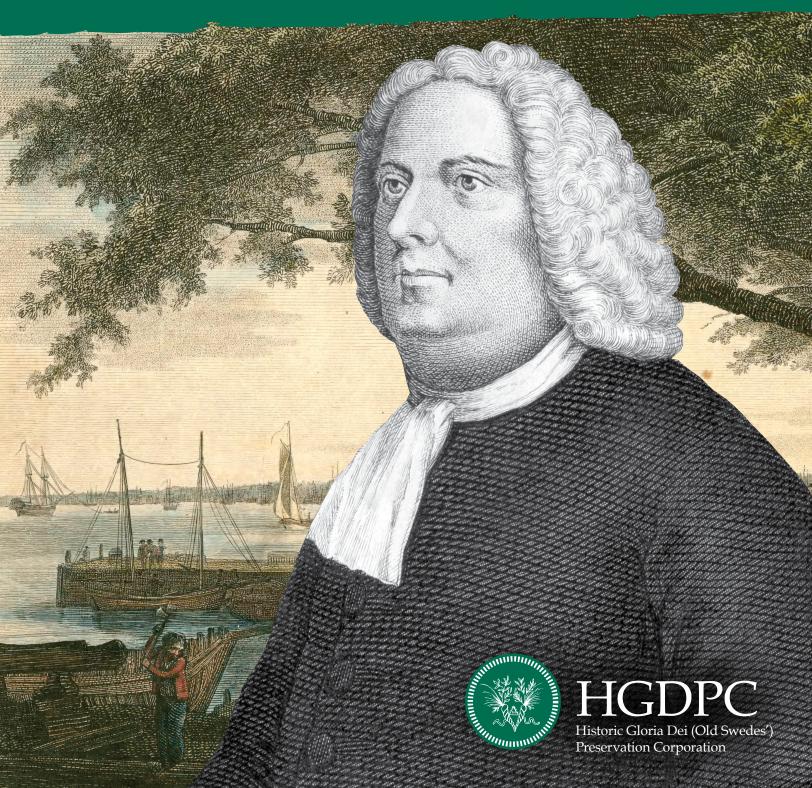
# The Amazing Success of William Penn



## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

By Candace Roberts



Candace Roberts, Chair of the Board

Marie Kondo, organizer consultant and television show host, gave the world a new phrase – sparking joy. I am troubled writing this introduction. Our preservation efforts at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church seems like a small thing compared to what's happening in the world right now. We're facing a global pandemic, a long overdue reckoning with social justice and fairness, and political divisions that appear to create winners and losers ... where and how do we spark joy?

Yet, it feels important to try. As I consider Gloria Dei Church, with its 320+ year history, I am reminded that this community faced great strife as well. Yellow fever, the Spanish flu, and countless other deadly infections and diseases deeply impacted those who came before us. Our churchyard is a testament to this. So many men, women and children who fought these diseases or succumbed to them are buried here. As we look to the past and contemplate the future, we realize that our lives can be the living memorial to those who came before us. And, as we preserve this sacred space, we honor these lives by sharing their stories and putting them into their historical context.

There is much to offer all of us at Gloria Dei. The grounds are always open for a peaceful walk. Seating is available to relax and read or just sit and reflect. Open space is available for young children to run around in safety. The Church sanctuary is a place of serene beauty combined with the whimsy of a congregation that hangs ship models from the ceiling. These things spark joy.

In this issue of *Founders Magazine*, author Jim Murphy tells us the story of William Penn. As a man of his time, he had a vision for the perfect society with best intentions for achieving that vision. Yet as we read on, we learn it was a flawed execution from a person who supported slavery. Of course, we have much to be grateful for in Philadelphia for his design of this marvelous city, his belief in religious freedom, and his Charter of Privileges that gave us laws to build this country. It's a compelling story that gives us much to think about and learn from.

I hope you enjoy this publication and will consider a gift to help us continue our preservation work at Gloria Dei! And please remember to spark joy whenever and wherever you can.

Respectfully submitted, Candace Roberts

Cover artwork features "Penn's tree, with the city & port of Philadelphia, on the river Delaware from Kensington" by William Birch (1828). Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.



Columbus Blvd. & Christian Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19147 phone // 215.389.1513 • email // preserveoldswedes@gmail.com • web // www.preserveoldswedes.org

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#### WHY I'M SO INTERESTED IN WILLIAM PENN

By Jim Murphy

This is a story about a man who used to be celebrated with week-long celebrations in Philadelphia. Yet by 2020, William Penn has become a forgotten hero.

And that's too bad. Because Penn developed what became the

"seed of a nation" and largest, most important and most cultured city in Colonial America by 1770 – the place where the United States of America was born. And he did it in record time.

He also created a "Holy Experiment" in Philadelphia that literally changed the world. And he went to jail in Europe many times, proving that he was a man of his convictions.

In this era of all-day-newsbreaks and endless tweets, where the only guaranteed way to get publicity in Philadelphia is to promote a nude bike ride, William Penn has become passé.

What a shame! As a certified tour guide, writer and amateur historian who has studied him for years, I've learned that William Penn – or Billy Penn as many of us call him in Philly – was amazingly successful here. It's well past time to give him his due and share this information with other Philadelphia area residents. And to let everyone know how lucky we've all been for Billy Penn's presence here in Philadelphia.

#### He was also a slave owner.

Let me also note right away that William Penn kept enslaved people, possibly 12 of them. I can't justify this behavior. I will only say he was a man of his time. I wish he hadn't been part of this despicable practice that devastated our nation and continues to do so even today. But he was.

And whether I'm doing in-person or online presentations or guided tours of Philly, I emphasize very early that Billy Penn

kept enslaved people. To give a more complete picture, though, I also do my best to discuss the many positive things Penn did for our city and our society. It's a pretty long and impressive list.

#### MYTHS & MISINFORMATION ABOUT BILLY PENN

I first realized how misunderstood Billy Penn was when a

seemingly educated university professor went on WHYY-TV's stage at a live meeting March 24, 2016 and said William Penn was a total failure.

Fortunately, noted Philadelphia author and expert John Andrew Gallery, former executive director of Preservation Alliance and member of the City Planning Commission, quickly set her straight. And, because some Philadelphians still really know their history, 10 or 20 other residents got in line and gave the professor a piece of their minds, too. I loved it. Score one for William Penn.

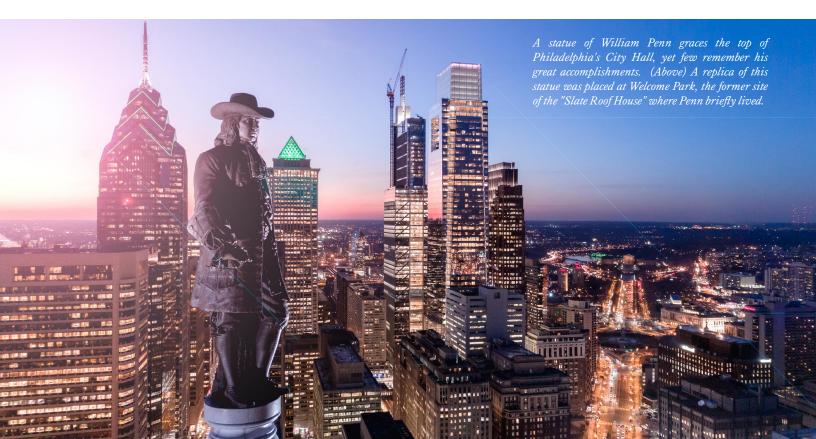
While I was growing up in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County, my parents taught me about Penn. When my wife and I moved to the Society Hill area in 2008, I started walking Philadelphia's streets every day ... and became far more familiar with our city's founder.

#### MY CONFUSION ABOUT WELCOME PARK

This sounds really dumb. But when I first went past Welcome Park at 2nd and Sansom Street across from City Tavern, I thought it was another tribute to Ben Franklin.

(Confession: I love Ben Franklin, and routinely tell my tour groups about Philly's two superstars, Penn and Ben. But Philadelphians often over-credit Franklin for things. If people don't know who invented something, they immediately say it was Ben Franklin. Often, they're wrong. However, Franklin was a remarkable genius who greatly helped Philadelphia and the U.S.)





At Welcome Park – the only public spot near Old City and Society Hill devoted to William Penn – I read about Penn's diverse talents on its informative wall panels, inspected his statue and small model of the historic Slate Roof House, then walked the large ground map of Philadelphia. And I went back many times.

Eventually I even hosted an Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides' William Penn birthday celebration there in 2015. (To hold the celebration on National Park Service property, I also had to put up \$1 million of liability insurance from my business.)

After some five years of researching stories about Philadelphia, I began documenting William Penn's amazing success in a slide presentation. And because there is so much to learn, I revise and add information every time I give it.

#### MY "AHA" MOMENT

I was waiting at the National Constitution Center for a busload of tourists from Mumbai. I looked down at Independence Hall and said to myself: "I wonder what this area looked like when William Penn came here in 1682." And I began researching, writing and pulling photos together.

But there was a lot of other legwork before that. Starting in 2011, I wrote 28 columns about the city for the Society Hill Reporter. Moving over to QVNA Magazine in 2016, I wrote 24 more there in 2 ½ years. With the agreement of Amy Grant, its editor, I began focusing my columns on Queen Village locations said to have blue and gold Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission markers on them.

At the very first one, though, Francis Daniel Pastorius' house, I found the marker missing. But I also discovered marvelous information about William Penn that helped me with

my ever-growing story.

When Pastorius, an educator, writer and founder of Germantown arrived in 1683, he described the city as a "howling wilderness." Philadelphia, he said, consisted of just three or small little cottages, with "the Residue being only Woods, Underwoods, Timber and Trees."

In fact, Pastorius couldn't even find the home of Cornelius Bom, a baker and fellow traveler on the ship that brought them both to

Philadelphia. Pastorius said he got lost several times just traveling from his cave by the waterside (near Front and Naudain Street today) to Bom's hut near 3rd and Chestnut Street.

#### AN EARLY SWEDISH SOURCE DESCRIBED A "GREAT FOREST"

Another source: On March 16, 1749, Peter Kalm interviewed



(Above) This painting by Peter Cooper, created about 1720, is the earliest painting of a North American city. It was found in the trash of a London curiosity shop in 1857 and sent here by George Miffllin Dallas, then the American minister at the Court of St. James. (Inset) William Penn medal by Lewis Pingo (1775).

### "Most of the tract (William Penn purchased) was covered with a hardwood forest of oak, black walnut, chestnut, cypress, hickory, beech and elm."

- Mary Maples Dunn and Richard S. Dunn, Philadelphia: A 300-Year History

Nils Gustafson, 91, reportedly the oldest Swede living on the Delaware. In the book, *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, he describes Gustafson as "pretty healthy" and a man "who could walk with the help of a cane." Gustafson, Kalm says, "still remembered to have seen a great forest on the spot where Philadelphia now stands."

More proof: Philadelphia: A 300-Year History, says "most of the tract was covered with a hardwood forest of oak, black walnut, chestnut, cypress, hickory, beech and elm."

So the spot where Penn founded his city was not flat farmland. It was either a howling wilderness or great forest. And not an easy place to develop his city.

Learning how primitive the conditions were when William Penn landed here shocked me. I had never heard that story before. But this was just the beginning of a number of myths about him I uncovered.

#### PENN'S SWEDISH CONNECTIONS

By the way, it's clear that William Penn personally knew a number of the Swedes who lived in the area before him. He often conversed with the Swedish pastor Andreas Rudman. In fact, he actually acquired much of the land for his city of Philadelphia from the three Swedish Svensson or Swanson brothers of Wicaco.

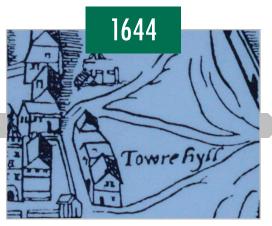
Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church was also well-known to William Penn and close to his new city, being "no farther than two musket shots from the south side of the town."

Another Gloria Dei connection: George W. Boudreau, author of Independence: A Guide to Historic Philadelphia, believes Gloria Dei is "the only surviving building in Pennsylvania that William Penn ever set foot in."

Why William Penn ever received his grant from Charles II in the first place is also in dispute. One group says the King owed his father Admiral William Penn a large a debt for funding some of Charles II's wars, and that the land grant was payback. Others claim the king was tired of the Quakers and wanted to get rid of them. It's true, the Quakers were a constant irritant to Charles II. They would not bow to him, take an oath, or serve in the military.

So giving William Penn the land helped the king two ways. It gave him a proprietor in the New World he trusted. And it got thousands of Quakers out of his country ... and out his hair.





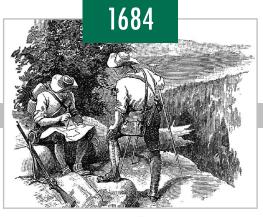
William Penn is born in London.



William Penn is expelled from Oxford for refusing to follow the Church of England's religious practices.



The Great Plague 100,000 people n The National Ar government and for



Penn rushes back to England to protect Philadelphia in a boundary dispute with Maryland that won't end for more than 85 years.



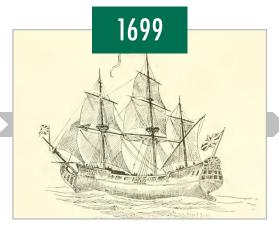
Penn receives the Charter for Pennsylvania. In 1682, he arrives in Pennsylvania on the Welcome.



Penn marries Guliel years later, Penn arbit Quakers in West Jerse of West N



Gulielma Springett dies. Two years later, Penn marries Hannah Callowhill.



Penn, Hannah and daughter Letitia sail to Philadelphia. John, Penn's son called "the American," is born a year later.



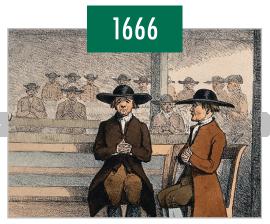
Penn and his family s Before leaving, he a Privi



probably kills over near London, says chives for the UK England and Wales.



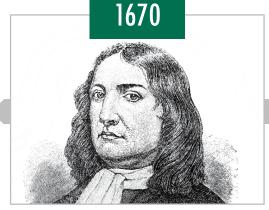
The Great Fire of London begins on Sunday morning in the Pudding Lane shop of the king's baker. When it ends four days later, only one-fifth of London is left standing.



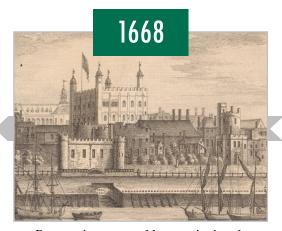
Penn joins the radical religious group, the Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers.



ma Springett. Three rates a dispute between y and becomes a trustee ew Jersey.



Penn is arrested for preaching on a London street. The jury ignores the judge's demand to convict Penn and finds him not guilty. Upset, the judge imprisons Penn and the jurors. The jury foreman appeals and wins.



Penn writes a pamphlet questioning the doctrine of the trinity. Charged with blasphemy, he is jailed in the Tower of London.



sail back to England. rafts the Charter of leges.



Penn's legal troubles with his former agent Philip Ford send him to debtor's prison. He later is freed.



In 1712, Penn suffers a major stroke that incapacitates him. Six years later, he dies.



Penn wanted his city to be as close to the sea as possible. When he couldn't purchase the land at Upland, he moved his city upriver between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers.

"A map of the improved part of the Province of Pennsilvania in America" by Thomas Holme (1681). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

#### 45,000 SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY TO DEVELOP

Whatever the real reason for the grant, the bottom line is William Penn became one of the world's largest land developers – ever.

Imagine: he received 45,000 square miles of prime territory. He then planned out his "City of Brotherly Love," promoted Pennsylvania by letters and promised freedom of religion to everyone who came here.

And it worked. Immigrants flocked here. Even though Philadelphia started 58 years after New York City and 52 years after Boston, by the time of the American Revolution, Philadelphia was the largest city in the country. (And we don't even know or care who started those cities. We know who founded Philadelphia.)

Credit for the city's success goes to both William Penn and Ben Franklin, or Penn and Ben, our two superstars. Penn laid the foundation for success and Franklin made everything he touched better. Unfortunately, the two missed each other by about 20 years.

#### **WILLIAM PENN'S BIG PIVOT**

William Penn's twin goals in developing Pennsylvania were: to set up a province where people could practice the religion of their choice without interference; and where he would make money from "quit rents," or ground-rent taxes.

He hoped to create a 10,000-acre city along the Delaware River. His first choice was at Upland, now the city of Chester, Delaware County.

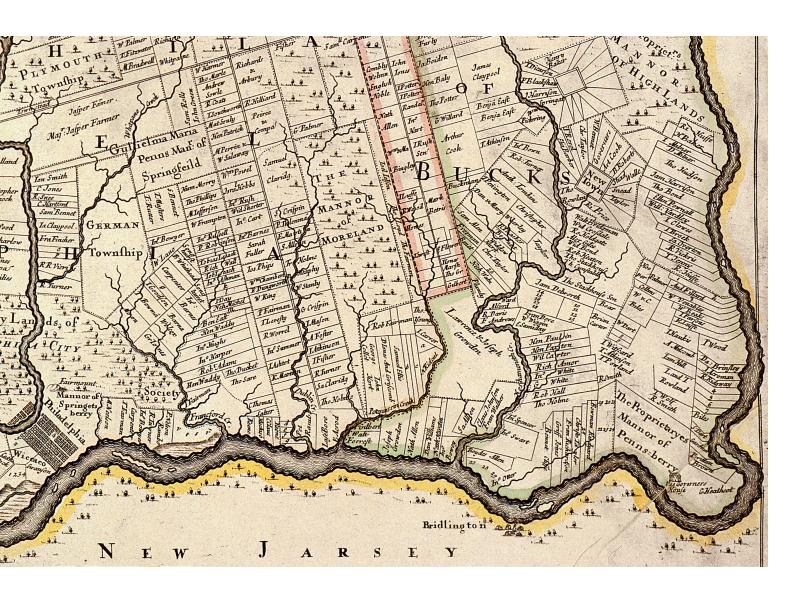
But the people who lived there didn't want to sell their property to him ... or move. So Penn's surveyors moved further north to the plot of ground between the Delaware and Schuylkill River where Penn's original 2-square-mile city of Philadelphia is located.

Penn wasn't happy when he learned about the change in plans. Nor was he happy that his new city was only 1,280 acres in size, instead of 10,000.But the new location had many advantages. And it turned out to be a real winner for Penn.

Penn wanted his city placed where it would be "high, dry, and healthy," says William E. Lingelbach in his journal article, "William Penn and City Planning."

And he got it. He also ended up with rivers on both sides; with a city that had plenty of trees for building ships; clay deposits to make bricks; and what became the largest freshwater port in the world for many years – even though it was 110 miles from the ocean.

He also believed his city property would be excellent for



wine-growing. But he was never able to produce the quality of wine he desired.

Fortunately for him, his colony had some of the most fertile ground in America just 60 miles to the west in Lancaster County, and Amish and Mennonite farmers to work the land.

His city grew remarkably fast. In a 1683 letter to the Free Society of Traders (from which Society Hill gets its name), William E. Lingelbach quotes Penn:

"But this I will say for the good Providence of God, that of all the many Places I have seen in the World, I remember not one better seated; so that it seems to me to have been appointed for a Town, whether we regard the Rivers, or the conveniency of the Coves, Docks, Springs, the loftiness and soundness of the Land and the Air, held by the People of these parts to be very good. It is advanced within less than a Year to about four Score Houses and Cottages, such as they are, where Merchants and Handicrafts, are following their Vocations as fast as they can, while the Countrymen are close at their Farms."

#### A LONG INTEREST IN HISTORY

By the way, I will never say I know everything there is about William Penn – or anything else. I learn something new every day. But I've always loved history - even when I was an English

major at La Salle College (now LaSalle University.)

In fact, one of my best research projects ever was done at La-Salle. But sadly, I no longer have a copy.

Here's what happened:

In my senior year at La Salle, I chose "Pennsylvania's Role in the Civil War" as the subject of my major history paper. For some reason, my teacher, who claimed he taught the way they did "on the continent," took an immediate dislike to the topic. He said, "If you choose that, there's no way you will get better than a "C."

I stuck to my guns, did a ton of research at the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt library, and felt I supported my case very strongly. Surprise, surprise, I received an "A+" grade. And I thought the paper was just that good.

However, two days before the end of the semester, my teacher announced in class that I had an incomplete, because he didn't have a mark in his book for my paper. I told him what mark he had given me and the very positive comments he'd made.

He demanded that I bring the original paper back to him. I did so the very next day, (we did not have copier machines then, just carbon paper), and never saw the original again. I always wondered if he presented it somewhere with his name on it. Unfortunately, I'll never know.

After graduating from LaSalle, I spent my whole business life writing for a living: for the federal government, the health care

industry, as a freelance reporter and for 16 years at two advertising and marketing agencies.

In 2004, I started my own marketing business and also began writing and editing *Choices*, a Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union magazine with a circulation of 80,000 copies. That publication won 20 major national awards in nine years, including Best Member Newsletter for credit unions with \$150 million or more in assets in both 2007 and 2011. It's a record I'm proud of.

#### WRITING AND TOUR-GUIDING

After I moved to center city in 2008, I walked the city relentlessly, peering into every street, gate, garden and walled-off area. Seeing an intriguing article about a handbook published by the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides (APT), I bought one. And found my niche.

Eventually I joined APT, attended educational programs at monthly meetings and an extensive annual lecture series, followed experienced guides on their tours, and eventually became a certified guide and a member of APT's board of directors.

I also kept writing my bi-monthly columns on historic people and places. I began each subject the same way: I treated it like a detective story and tried to solve the mystery.

I did in-person research at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania or central branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, and

as much online work as I could. My approach: to look for fascinating facts or interesting oddities I could present in short columns that ran about 750 to 800 words each. If the material interested me, I felt it would interest my readers.

Each column took me an average of 25 to 35 hours to research and write. If I couldn't find something interesting, I just kept digging until I did.

Respecting my readers' time, I also included Fast Facts with every story. Why? So people could quickly decide if they wanted to read it or not.

Was it working? I got my answer one day from a neighbor I hardly knew. He asked me if I was the Jim Murphy then writing for the *Society Hill Reporter*?

When I said, "Yes," he told me my column was the first one he turned to in each issue, because he enjoyed it so much. Soon, others told me the same thing.

After about eight years, I turned all of this research into a book. Called *Real Philly History, Real Fast*, it should be out in mid-2021, if all goes well. I have great hopes for it. The book is filled with little-known facts about some of Philly's heroes and

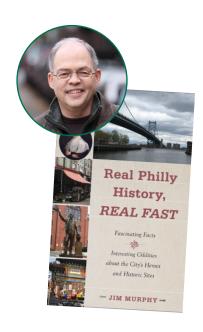
historic sites. And it contains a great deal of information I have never read anywhere else. |



- He developed some 45,000 square miles of territory, making him one of the world's largest developers ever.
- His "Holy Experiment" in Pennsylvania promoted religious tolerance, attracting people here from many countries, religions and walks of life. Because of his foresight, Philadelphia soon outgrew both New York and Boston, becoming the largest and most important city in the Colonies.
- He set up a framework of government that allowed for trial by jury and other civil rights ... plus peaceful change through amendments. His 1701 Charter of Privileges anticipated the American Bill of Rights.
- He reduced the number of crimes punishable by death from over 200 in England to just two here murder and treason.
- He treated the Lenni Lenape Indians fairly and paid them for their land. He did the same for the Swedes and the Dutch, who had settled here before the English.

- He helped lay out the grid plan for Philadelphia that became a template for many other American cities.
- He helped make Pennsylvania one of the most successful and fastest-growing colonies in North America. Penn's policies may well have made Philadelphia an ideal spot for Ben Franklin our most revered citizen to arrive and thrive.
- He watches over his city from high above City Hall, the largest known statue atop a building anywhere in the world.
- He thwarted Lord Baltimore's attempts to make Philadelphia "one of the prettiest towns in Maryland."
- He was, said Thomas Jefferson, "the greatest law-giver the world has produced."
- He accomplished all this ... while living here less than four years.





Jim Murphy is a certified Philadelphia tour guide and author of over 55 articles on Philly's heroes and historic sites for the Society Hill Reporter and Queen Village Neighbors Association Magazine. His stories are now being compiled into a book for Temple University Press titled: Real Philly History, Real Fast due to be published in 2021. He also spearheaded William Penn birthday celebrations at Welcome Park and City Hall in 2015 and 2016.

In addition, Jim guided the first half of three all-day Great River-to-River Tours conducted by the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides, and served on its board for about four years. He left the board in 2019 to complete his book.

Jim presented on William Penn to professional associations, historical societies, churches, libraries, annual meetings, community groups and high-rise condos and cooperatives in Philadelphia, Delaware County and New Jersey.

He also led a free 3-hour Jane's Walk on William Penn in October 2019 and has been researching and studying William Penn since 2010.

Jim lived in Delaware County most of his life, and wrote and edited "Choices," the awardwinning magazine of the Franklin Mint FCU for nine years.

A former creative director of copy for Devon Direct Marketing and Advertising, Jim has run his own marketing consulting business since 2004. He moved to center city Philadelphia in 2008.

You can reach Jim at murfman1@comcast.net or his cellphone: 610-506-3024.

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Jim Murphy was our guest lecturer at our first virtual "Great Talks at Gloria Dei" this fall. His lecture on William Penn was followed by a live Q&A with the audience. You can watch the entire program at our website.

www.preserveoldswedes.org/penn

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Supporting Our Foundation

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- The Swedish Colonial Society
- Margaretha Talerman
- Rev. Dr. Kim-Eric Williams
- Jeanette Woehr



The Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Preservation Corporation was established to fund, support, and supervise the restoration, renovation, and ongoing maintenance of the Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church buildings, grounds, and graveyard so that future generations may share in this historic and architectural treasure. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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My company will match this gift.		Exp. Date: CVV: (3 or 4 digit value)
<ul> <li>☐ This donation was made in memory of:</li> <li>☐ You have permission to display my name or the name of my honoree on your website.</li> </ul>		Name: (As it appears on card)